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She took off her clothes and put them on the bank, and she stepped into the river. Now, be it known to you that, though she could see him not, there was concealed on the bank a youth of the Fetla tribes, and his name was Kadhim. He did not own a single horse or mare, nor did he even own the leg of a mare. He owned no sheep and he owned no land, and he lived by eating at the guest tent of his sheikh. And as for clothes, he used to go to the river and set snares for the sandgrouse and partridges when they came to drink, and sell them in the market to buy cloth.

And Kadhim was concealed on the bank of the river watching his snares when he saw a girl beautiful as a moon come to the river and divest herself of her clothes. He saw that she was perfect in figure, for her neck was slender and her shoulders smooth and soft and her breasts rose firmly and clearly as do the desert dunes in moonlight. As for her waist it was slender and her thighs were round and smooth and around her navel was tattooed a butterfly. And he watched her and forgot the sandgrouse and he forgot the partridges. And after she had bathed in the river she dried herself by lying in the sun. Then she put on her clothes and filled the jar with water and returned to the town.

And the next day at the rising of the sun Kadhim concealed himself in the same place and awaited the coming of the girl. And about half an hour after dawn she came down and drew water from that very same place. And Kadhim, who was concealed in the tamarisk bushes, watched her, but she did not take off her clothes. She merely filled the pot with water and put it on her shoulder, and she turned and returned to the town. But Kadhim, who was a youth in the seventeenth year of his life and swift of foot, ran ahead behind the fruit groves and date trees and came out on the path ahead of her, and when

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was no fear in her heart, for she knew that Abbas Ali el Qassab would die before he could marry her. And Kadhim sat watching his snares and thinking: How can I become a great merchant? Kadhim was so poor that he had not even a single copper coin in his pocket; he owned no shoes, he had no headcloth, he was not even wearing any vest or underclothes, and his only garment was his thob. And Kadhim decided: I will borrow money, and trade with my capital and become a great merchant.

Then Kadhim went to the town and he was walking in his bare feet, and he went to the shop of Abdul Rashid and saluted the merchant and said: Give me a roll of cloth and a loan of five gold liras and I will give you my pledge. And Abdul Rashid looked and he saw that the youth was dressed in a dirty and torn thob and that he was bareheaded and barefooted, but he saw that he carried his head like a hawk, so he said: You are, then, from the tribes? And Kadhim nodded and said: Yes.

Now, let it be known to you that the tribes were much poorer in the days of the Ottomans than they are today, for they were then unable to cultivate their land in peace and prosperity, and it often happened that it was necessary to celebrate a marriage or observe the rites of death when there was no money in the purse of the head of the house. Then would he go to the town and to a merchant and say: Give me cloth and money and take my pledge. And as for the pledge, if he had a gold or silver ring, he would give it, and if he had none then he would give his headcloth to the merchant, or even his riding switch, saying: This contains my honour. And when the pledge was given payment was always made, for this is the custom of the tribes.

Abdul Rashid Mejid looked at the youth Kadhim and

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he saw that he was truly from the tribes, for his bearing was proud and his gaze the gaze of the peregrine falcon. So he said: Take the money and the cloth and give me your pledge. Then Kadhim's cheeks flushed red, for he had forgotten to bring a pledge with him, nor did he own a ring, and he had no headcloth and he owned no riding switch, for he had no horse. But his brain was quick and he thought and answered: Verily a man's honour is contained in the hair of his moustache, for it is his moustache that distinguishes his face from that of a woman or a boy. Therefore I shall give you one hair of my moustache as a pledge. And Abdul Rashid Mejid was astonished at the words of the youth.

Then Kadhim called for scissors and for a mirror, and he studied his face in the mirror and searched for a hair in his moustache which was less beautiful than the rest. And he found such a hair and snipped it off and gave it to Abdul Rashid Mejid. And Abdul Rashid Mejid took the hair and put it with the pledges, and he put it in a box with the rings and the headcloths and riding switches, and he gave Kadhim five gold liras and a roll of cloth.

Kadhim took the money and the cloth and he went to the shop of a tailor whom he knew and trusted, for the man's father was from the Fetla tribes. He said to the tailor: Take this cloth and this money and make me the clothes of a very rich merchant, and bring me a beard of sheep's wool which I will fasten to my face, and keep this a secret, for it is more important to me than life itself. And the tailor said: Cut my head to keep the secret. Then the tailor made for Kadhim the clothes of a wealthy merchant and he brought for him a beard of sheep's wool, and when Kadhim had put on the beard and put on the clothes he looked so important and distinguished that anyone who

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coppersmith, yet I have a bride fit for the Sultan himself. And after a few days spent in married bliss Khalila woke Khalid at the rising of the sun and she said to him: Rise and go to your work, for the house is dirty and it needs cleaning and attention. And Khalid rose and he went to his work.

At the setting of the sun the coppersmiths in the bazaar of Umm el Brum closed their shops and Khalid's master permitted him to go and return to his home. And Khalid entered his house and he stood and rubbed his eyes, for he thought he was in a dream and that what he saw could not be true. For his house was carpeted with the most beautiful carpet made of silk, and it was truly worth not less than one hundred gold liras, and on it stood chairs and tables made of the finest woods, and on the tables were dishes and vases of silver. And Khalid saw that his house looked richer than that of the wealthiest merchant in Basra, and he was amazed at what he saw.

And he said to his wife Khalila: From whence is this wealth? She replied and said: Did you think that I was going to live in a mud hut with no carpet, and with chairs and tables of white deal, and with dishes of earthenware? I am of gentle birth and I need delicate and beautiful things. Therefore have I pledged your credit and brought these few poor things we need, and even this was difficult, for the merchants did not seem to think much of your ability to pay. And Khalid became angry and he said: Woman, what have you done? Know you it will take me fifty years to pay for this merchandise? She replied: Am I then to live in squalor? Are you not a man that you cannot pay for the needs of the house?

Then Khalid's fury grew, and it was in his thoughts that he should beat his wife, and he picked up a stick and